

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

By

CAROLYN LORIS CAMPBELL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

PAINTING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

Submitted by Carolyn Loris Campbell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Fine Arts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: CAROLYN LORIS CAMPBELL

TITLE OF THESIS: FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
A Stoppit	2004	Acrylic & Graphite on canvas	91" x 66.5"

Insurance Value: \$5,000.00

CAROLYN CAMPBELL, Artist Statement

To Call Me Ishmael

At six years old, walking home from Parkview School, I remember thinking that it was odd that the book I was reading was set in our neighbourhood. That was the beginning of my overly emphatic sense of identifying with the characters in books. Even now, reading contemporary North American fiction, I habitually locate all of the characters in my house. If I think of a particular room there, I think not only of my memories, but also slightly of those of, for instance, Myla Goldberg's Eliza or Ann-Marie MacDonald's Frances. This intimacy gives me a piquant empathy for the characters, which is sometimes overwhelming (and has driven me predominantly to French literature for the time being). I find it interesting that a cultural creation can have an imprint on my personal history.

Jon Bowen, writing for Salon.Com in June 4, 1999¹, discusses findings from a University of Washington study that measured participants' tendency to internalize fiction, and mentally process fictional information with the result of believing they had experienced something they had read. This phenomenon has been labelled "Call me Ishmael" in reference to the first person narrator, and the first line in *Moby Dick*. Setting out with these paintings, I wanted to make pictures that show a contemporary person shouldering a past that is not necessarily her own, but that becomes her own through the act of the anachronistic pairing. The titles of the works relate to the books I am reading while making the pictures, and play a communicative role with the figure. The paintings for this exhibition are about making manifest physical evidence of what I have seen and remember, and the responsibility and legacy we have to the ownership of our real and culturally acquired history. I see the women in this MFA exhibition as semiotic of the first person narrative, and their story is mine.

The models are all artists whose work I greatly respect. They are also beautiful, and powerful in a timeless manner that befits the historical heft that they must carry in the pictures. Each model is outfitted with a body and clothing from Holbein, or Manet. The drawing of the faces is highly concentrated, while the bodies slip slightly out of focus, as if to physically manifest their respective places in time. Sometimes they are layered with references to formalist painting, demanding a place in, or behind the frontal picture plane, other times they sit behind drawings of wallpaper, and as such the formal handling of the paint is an equalizer of each reference. The self-portraits on the other hand, carry a narrative that subtly depicts a deliberation or tipping of a metaphorical scale.

*Writes Alain de Botton: "We meet people who have crossed deserts, floated on icecaps and cut their way through jungles – and yet in whose souls we would search in vain for evidence of what they have witnessed. Dressed in pink and blue pyjamas, satisfied within the confines of his own bedroom, Xavier de Maistre was gently nudging us to try, before taking off for distant hemispheres, to notice what we have already seen."*²

¹ <http://archive.salon.com/health/log/1999/06/04/memory/print.html>

² De Botton, Alain, *The Art of Travel*, page 254

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Thank-you to my friends and colleagues, Colin Birnie, Julian Forrest, Jeff Graham, Shawn Serfas, Cynthia Gardiner, Quentin Maki, Duncan Johnson, Erik Watterkotte, Shannon Collis, Tonia Bonnell, Jacqueline Barrett, Rob Willms and Paul Freeman. I appreciate your honesty and friendship. Blair Brennan, your work is an inspiration. I am very grateful to Brent Wasyk, Ruby Mah, Blair and Julian for your expertise and care in hanging the exhibition.

To Shannon, Tonia and Isla, I cannot thank-you enough for participating in these paintings.

The following books significantly impacted the titles of the large paintings and the artist statement, and to the authors I am indebted.

Honoré de Balzac, The Unknown Masterpiece

Honoré de Balzac, Gambara

Alain de Botton, The Art of Travel

Albert Camus, The Fall

Gabriel García Márquez, Love in the Time of Cholera

Charles Olson, Call Me Ishmael

Dai Sijie, Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

Gaétan Soucy, The Little Girl who was too Fond of Matches

Simon Winchester, The Professor and the Madman

Thank-you especially to my family, Steve, Connor and Brendan as well as my sister Lori and my parents, for all of your help and encouragement, through this process, and always.



"Lalalalala", Carolyn Campbell, 2004
Acrylic and Graphite on Canvas 66" x 66"



"It Will Always Be Too Late, Fortunately", Carolyn Campbell, 2004
Acrylic and Graphite on Canvas 90" x 66"

Carolyn Campbell
Graduate Thesis Exhibition

To Call Me Ishmael
May 18 – 31, 2004

Slide List

1. Of a Fondness for Matches, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 66.5" x 67.5"
2. lalalalala, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 66.5" x 67.5"
3. Of Which it Rightly Claims to be a Portrait, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 91" x 66.5"
4. Plucked, 2003
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 91" x 54"
5. It Will Always Be Too Late, Fortunately, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90" x 64"
6. May I, Without Running the Risk of Intruding, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90" x 64"
7. A Stoppit, 2004
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 91" x 66.5"
8. She Had Learnt One Thing From Balzac, 2003
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90" x 64"
9. Of Gabriel and Cholera, 2003
acrylic and graphite on canvas, 90" x 216"
10. Begat 4, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 9.5" x 6"
11. Begat 8, 2003
acrylic and toner on board, 10" x 5.5"

12. Begat 19, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 6.75" x 7.25"
13. Begat 20, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 4.5" x 4.5"
14. Begat 3, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 8.5" x 7.5"
15. Begat 6, 2004
acrylic, graphite and toner on board, 5.5" x 5.75"
16. Begat 23, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 5.75" x 4.75"
17. Begat 11, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 6" x 4.75"
18. Begat 7, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 4" x 4.5"
19. Begat 28, 2004
acrylic, graphite and toner on board, 5.5" x 5.5"
20. Begat 26, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 6.75" x 7.25"
21. Begat 22, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 5.5" x 5"
22. Begat 14, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 9.75" x 3"
23. Begat 18, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 5.5" x 10.25"
24. Begat 16, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 7" x 6"
25. Begat 25, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 7.5" x 6.75"

26. Begat 12, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 9.5" x 5.5"
27. Begat 5, 2003
acrylic and toner on board, 10.25" x 3.5"
28. Begat 9, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 10.25" x 9"
29. Begat 27, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 4" x 4"
30. Begat 10, 2003
acrylic and toner on board, 10" x 8.75"
31. Begat 2, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 7.5" x 6.75"
32. Begat 1, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 4" x 7"
33. Begat 29, 2003
acrylic, graphite and toner on board, 6" x 6"
34. Begat 17, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 7" x 7.25"
35. Begat 15, 2003
acrylic and toner on board, 9.75" x 20.5"
36. Begat 13, 2004
acrylic and toner on board, 5.75" x 6"

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